

INT. PROCTOR & ELIZABETH

ELIZABETH

Aye, it is a proper court they have now. They've sent four judges out of Boston, she says, weighty magistrates of the General court, and at the head sits Deputy Governor of the Province.

PROCTOR

(Astonished)

Why, she's mad!

ELIZABETH

I would to God she were. There be fourteen people in the jail now, she says.

PROCTOR simply looks at her, unable to grasp it.
And they'll be tried, and the court have power to hang them too, she says.

PROCTOR

(Scoffing, but
without conviction:)

Ah, they'd never hang-

ELIZABETH

The Deputy Governor promise hangin' if they'll not confess, John. The town's gone wild, I think. She speak of Abigail, and I thought she were a saint, to hear her. Abigail brings the other girls into the court, and where she walks the crowd will part like the sea for Israel. And folks are brought before them, and if they scream and howl and fall to the floor-- the person's clapped in the jail for bewithin' them.

PROCTOR

(Wide-eyed)

Oh, it is a black mischief.

ELIZABETH

I think you must go to Salem, John. I think so. you must tell them it is a fraud.

PROCTOR

(Thinking beyond this)

Aye, it is, it is surely.

ELIZABETH

Let you go to Ezekiel Cheever-- he knows you well. And tell him what she said to you last week in her uncle's house. She said it had naught to do with witchcraft, did she not?

PROCTOR

(In thought)

Aye, she did, she did. (now a pause)

ELIZABETH

(Quietly, fearing to
anger him by
prodding)

God forbid you keep that from the court, John. I think they must be told.

PROCTOR

(Quietly, struggling
with his thought)

Aye, they must, they must. It is a wonder they do believe her.

ELIZABETH

I would go to Salem now, John-- let you go tonight.

PROCTOR

I'll think on it.

ELIZABETH

(With courage now)

You cannot keep it, John.

PROCTOR

(Angering)

I know I cannot keep it. I say I will think on it!

ELIZABETH

(Hurt and very coldly)

Good, then, let you think on it.

She stands and starts to walk out of the room.

PROCTOR

I am only wondering how I may prove what she told me, Elizabeth. If the girl's a saint now, I think it is not easy to prove she's fraud, and the town gone so silly. She told it to me in a room alone-- I have no proof for it.

ELIZABETH

You were alone with her?

PROCTOR

(Stubbornly)

For a moment alone, aye.

ELIZABETH

Why, then, it is not as you told me.

PROCTOR

(His anger rising)

For a moment, I say. The others come in soon after.

ELIZABETH

(Quietly - she has
suddenly lost all
faith in him)

Do as you wish, then. She turns to leave.

PROCTOR

Woman.

(She turns back to
him.)

I'll not have your suspicion any more.

ELIZABETH

(a little loftily)

I have no--

PROCTOR

I'll not have it!

ELIZABETH

Then let you not earn it.

PROCTOR

(With a violent
undertone)

You doubt me yet?

ELIZABETH

(With a smile to
keep her dignity)

John, if it were not Abigail that you must go to hurt,
would you falter now? I think not.

PROCTOR

Now look you--

ELIZABETH

I see what I see, John.

PROCTOR

(With solemn warning)

You will not judge me more, Elizabeth. I have good reason
to think before I charge fraud on Abigail, and I will think
on it. Let you look to your own improvement before you go
to judge your husband any more. I have forgot Abigail, and--

ELIZABETH

And I.

PROCTOR

Spare me! You forget nothin' and forgive nothin'. Learn
charity, woman. I have gone tiptoe in this house all seven
month since she is gone. I have not moved from there to
there without I think to please you, and still an
everlasting funeral marches round your heart. I cannot

(MORE)

PROCTOR (CONT'D)

Speak but I am doubted, every moment judged for lies, as though I come into a court when I come into this house!

ELIZABETH

John, you are not open with me. You saw her with a crowd, you said. Now you--

PROCTOR

I'll plead my honesty no more, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

(Now she would
justify herself)

John, I am only--

PROCTOR

No more! I should have roared you down when first you told me your suspicion. But I wilted, and like a Christian, I confessed. Confessed! Some dream I had must have mistaken you for God that day. But you're not, you're not, and let you remember it! Let you look sometimes for the goodness in me, and judge me not.

ELIZABETH

I do not judge you. The magistrate sits in your heart that judges you. I never thought you but a good man, John
(With a smile)
only somewhat bewildered.

PROCTOR

(Laughing bitterly)

Oh, Elizabeth, your justice would freeze beer!

He turns suddenly toward a sound outside. he starts for the door as...